



connections

Newsletter of the Presbytery of New Covenant

Growing congregations that passionately engage their community to make disciples.



Pastors experience Faithwalking

Pastors spend all their waking hours (and perhaps some of their sleeping ones) working with and on behalf of their parishioners in the



hopes of helping them go deep into their spiritual

lives. Sometimes, though, they need to take a brief time out to renew and restore their own faith lives.

The Professional Life Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry is pleased to present such an opportunity this fall. Faithwalking is an overnight retreat that follows a rhythm of hearing presentations on missional living, spending time

in solitude, and sharing experiences in a small group setting. This first of potentially two retreats will help identify the work of spiritual formation needed in order to live missionally.

The retreat will be held, *for pastors only*, beginning Tuesday, October 13, at 2:30 p.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m. Thursday, October 16, at The Cenacle Retreat Center (420 N. Kirkwood Drive, Houston 77079). Cost is \$295 per person. The cost includes a single room, meals, material, and the Faithwalking staff.

Call Patricia Brantley, pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org, to register for the Faithwalking Retreat.

‘Come and See’ - New Beginnings Assessment

This September, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the PC(USA), and the United Church of Christ are joining efforts to offer the New Beginnings Assessment service to congregations. The service specializes in helping congregations make bold decisions about their future. If your

church answers “yes” to three or more of the following, it may be time for a New Beginning:

- Less than 70 in worship, or more than 70 in worship but significant decline for a decade
- Wrestling with future vision for the church
- Significant building issues
- Aging membership or a changing neighborhood
- Trouble paying bills and/or paying off a loan
- Currently in interim time of transition

With New Beginnings, your congregation will:

- Receive a comprehensive report of strengths and challenges, as well as a realistic picture of possible future directions
- Be trained in a discernment process to follow God’s lead in choosing a new direction
- Discover available ministry opportunities in the community



- Learn how to discuss and implement change in a healthy, open manner
- Receive additional leadership training on leading through change
- Set a course for future strategic and visionary ministry planning

A “Come and See Event” will be held Saturday, September 13, 10:00 a.m. to Noon, at John Knox PC, Houston (2525 Gessner Road). This free two-hour event is designed to inform congregations about the process and schedule for the New Beginnings Assessment Program. Congregations are encouraged to bring pastors and teams of five to ten leaders to the event.

For more information, contact Mary Marcotte, 713-526-2585, x224 or mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

“I’ve been actively participating in Faithwalking’s programs for 5+ years. Faithwalking’s content is a powerful mix of theology and psychology that, when the participant is willing to do the hard work of applying it, truly empowers transformation in their life. I have experienced this in my own life and seen evidence of it in the lives of numerous members of my congregation. There isn’t a week that goes by that I don’t consciously apply Faithwalking principles at work and at home.”

TE Jeff Smith, St. Andrew’s PC, Houston

Inside

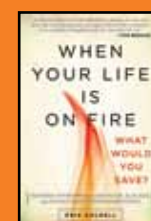
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NEW COVENANT CONNECTIONS

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HELEN WOLF
Editor

CARRIE WALKER
Layout

PATRICIA BRANTLEY
Circulation Manager

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Email: hwolf@pbyofnewcovenant.org

Send changes of address to:
Patricia Brantley
pbrantley@pbyofnewcovenant.org

The Presbytery of New Covenant
www.pbyofnewcovenant.org



From the Cole Mine

Rev. Mike Cole, General Presbyter
Presbytery of New Covenant

“Making Sabbath”

Last month one of our pastors leading our staff in Wednesday worship confessed to being a “serial Sabbath-breaker.” I chuckled at the turn of phrase and then as I thought more about it, I realized that her confession is my confession, too. Not only do I break Sabbath (working on Sunday is an occupational given), but I also rarely find a way to honor Sabbath rest during the remainder of the week.

Sabbath is one of the concepts that pastors are really good about proclaiming and lousy about doing. We may preach a good game, but just ask our families about how much Sabbath rest we take. On second thought, don’t ask our families because you will hear more about us than we want shared!

Sabbath was an integral part of Jewish understanding of their covenantal relationship with God. God rested on the seventh day and expected his people to do the same. Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word “Shabbat,” which means “to stop, to cease, to be brought to a stop.”

Life today is so hectic, fast-paced, and full of multi-tasking that it’s difficult to think of a moment in time when we actually set aside time for rest, reflection, or refreshment. We behave as if we believe that only the busy are assured salvation (actually “salvation” is more like it!).

Wayne Muller writes in his book *Sabbath*: “A successful life has become a violent enterprise. We make war on our own bodies, pushing them beyond their limits; war on our children because we cannot find enough time to be with them when they are hurt and afraid and need our company; war on our spirit because we are too preoccupied to listen to the quiet voices that seek to nourish and refresh us.”

I’m guilty of that kind of violence throughout most of my life. Oh, sure, I set aside time each day for scripture, devotions, and prayer, but if I’m really pressed for time, that gets shunted aside. But the vast majority of my days are spent listening to all sorts of voices besides the still small voice of God. In fact, my life is so full of pre-arranged appointments and other “stuff” that I sometimes wonder if Jesus will get tired of knocking on my door.

I’m old enough to remember the days of “Blue Laws,” when almost every business was required to close on Sunday to observe the Sabbath. Many folks today can’t imagine not being able to go to a store to buy whatever you want just because it’s a Sunday. I’m sure that many think that was an antiquated law that needed to yield to consumer pressure, but there are days when I long for a “blue law” that would force me to be still for a

while.

Taking Sabbath rest assumes that Sabbath is somehow automatically available to us, but it isn’t. Thus, I’m embarking on making Sabbath rest wherever and whenever I can. I’m starting with my day off – Fridays. From now on I’m turning off business email and business calls to my cell for some Sabbath rest on Fridays. Most pastors don’t have that luxury because there can be emergencies that require the pastor’s attention immediately. However, I encourage each of you to think carefully before you send an email or make a call to your pastor on his/her day off. Can it wait? If so, wait and let your pastor know you refrained from contacting them on their day off. They will give thanks to God for that gift of Sabbath rest.

As for me, I’m going to make myself a little less accessible to the presbytery while I make myself more accessible to God, Ellie, and my family. How about you? What can you do to make Sabbath?

In Christ,

Powerful tools for pastor caregiving

Pastors are invited to attend a six-week program for PC(USA) pastors on Thursdays, September 25 to October 30, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Interface Samaritan Counseling Center (4803 San Felipe St., behind St. Philip PC, Houston). Class size is limited to 14; only one pastor per church. Cost: \$45.

Based on a program developed at Stanford University, the series will focus on participants as they learn effective self-care tools: tools for dealing with stress, tools for effective communication, tools for communicating in difficult situations, tools for dealing with emotions, and tools for mastering tough decisions.



The interactive group lessons, discussion, and braining storming will be led by trained facilitators. The program has been endorsed by the Committee on Ministry, Professional Life Committee.

Registration required.
Call Martha Doolittle at Interface Samaritan, 713-626-7990, ext. 102.

A note from Sherry Kenney

Dear Friends,

It was a privilege to be with you at the recent presbytery meeting in College Station. I enjoyed the worship, the business, the food and the fellowship, but most importantly the sermons given by four young pastors. It is so nice – having completed my first year with the Presbyterian Foundation – to walk into the room and see people I know and who know me. Thank you for helping me to feel at home!

Fall is coming, and with it, for most of you, the annual stewardship pledge campaign. While we at the Foundation urge churches to cultivate a year-round culture of generosity, we understand the practical benefit of the yearly opportunity for church members to engage in prayerful consideration and recommit to the financial support of their church.



Sherry Kenney

As you plan your campaign, please consider these questions:

- Are you offering your members and friends the option of online giving?
- Are you using a narrative budget, with pictures and testimonials?
- Are you taking generational differences into consideration when you invite giving?
- Are you reminding faithful members to remember their church in their wills?

The Foundation has many resources at its website, www.presbyterianfoundation.org, to assist pastors, and stewardship chairpersons in planning and engaging the congregation in this annual program. And please remember to use me, your human resource. I welcome your calls and emails, and am available for meetings and events. May God bless each of you until we meet again.

Sherry Hester Kenney, Ministry Relations Officer
Sherry.kenney@presbyterianfoundation.org, 855-342-4130

Next Connections deadline

The next *Connections* copy deadline is Wednesday, October 15, for the November/December issue. Please send articles and photos to Helen Wolf at any time hwolf@pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Clerk's Corner

Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of New Covenant



I have felt like I have been surrounded by chaos for the past couple of months. In the midst of the many things that seem to be happening in the presbytery, we have sold our house of 29 years. Right after returning from General Assembly, we listed our house on a Saturday, and found a house to buy on Sunday (after looking for four years). We put in a contract which was accepted, and then began the process of getting our house ready to put on the market.

This meant loading several bins of paper for recycling and moving a load for Salvation Army (the better stuff) and another for 1-800-GOT-JUNK (the not-so-good stuff). We have given away books to the local library and to a local church. The house was freshly painted, closets cleaned out and organized, and extra furniture moved to the garage. We listed it on a Friday and signed a contract the next Wednesday – with a builder who intends to scrape the lot and never saw that house. It was still work that needed to be done.

In the process of cleaning, I found a placemat from a lunch where Rev. Asa Hunt was the speaker. It must have been while my daughter (who is now 30) was at the Presbyterian School. Asa shared with us his Ten Commandments for dealing with children. Here they are:

1. Thou shalt not judge first but seek to understand.
2. Thou shalt not discount the child.
3. Thou shalt not rehearse what you will say to the child.
4. Thou shalt not engage in internal dialogue.
5. Thou shalt not be in a hurry.
6. Thou shalt listen with all of your sensory perceptions.
7. You shall check the meaning of the child's symbols.
8. You shall be a safe person to talk things over with.
9. You shall spend time affirming the child in the listening.
10. You shall be authentic.

He added this: "Be quick to listen and slow to speak." The book of James adds this, "and be slow to anger." I admit that this is hard to do. Sometimes when I feel attacked, I lash out... which is not so slow to speak or to anger.

I wonder how Asa's commandments would fit in other relationships – not just in dealing with our children. What would it look like if we were not in a hurry and could take time to affirm one another? I hear a lot of judgment from some church members against other church members. Would reconciliation happen if we sought first to understand rather than to judge?

I miss mentors like Asa – people that challenge me to be a better person, and to live my faith authentically and in truth. I hope that I can live into the baton being passed to me, and then my passing it on to those who come after me. I wonder what sort of a mentor am I... and what else do I need to learn?

I am grateful for these life lessons and for those who have taught them. I wonder what your Ten Commandments for living would be?

The new Peace & Global Witness Offering

Because of action taken by General Assembly, the PC(USA)'s Peacemaking Offering has been transformed into the Peace & Global Witness Offering. This new Offering will have a greater global reach, more significant impact, and bring peace to people through Christ. A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to address systems of injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to sustain their local peacemaking ministries.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering is received during the Season of Peace, which ends on World Communion Sunday.



Mary's Musings

Mary Marcotte, Associate General Presbyterian
Presbytery of New Covenant

- We only have three youth...
How can we have a Youth Program?
- How do we do children's programs with a handful of children?
- Sunday soccer games are killing our Sunday School program!
- We are so tired of doing more with less and reaching fewer people with our programs. Sigh.

Have you said or heard variations on these themes in your church? Did you notice the recurring word in the questions and complaints above? PROGRAM!

Many of us who are looking toward the future of Christian formation have strongly suspected that it's time and past time to change the framing of our work in Christian Education away from a programmatic model. I confess it's a particular challenge to educators because for decades programmatic approaches have been our 'go to' solutions for ministry needs.

Creating a program to attract a population may have great success--but it can also contribute to a consumerist model of church that falls far short of transformation. Today even our young children seem to deal with so many demands on time that commitment to one more program just isn't helpful. Despite the line in the movie *Field of Dreams*, we are no longer in a time in which the mantra *if you build it they will come* works.

The truth is that there have been those who have questioned the effectiveness of these models for decades. All the way back in 1976, John Westerhoff was asking the question, Will our children have faith? In his landmark book titled with that question, Westerhoff looked at the devastating impact of substituting a "school of the church" model for a more organic, relational model based on cross generational sharing of story and practice.

All of this is why I am so delighted that our Congregational Resourcing Team is bringing in Leif Kehrwald of Vibrant Faith Ministries for a free, one day training event Thursday, October 2, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Spring Branch PC, Houston. Rather than a program, the Vibrant Faith approach encourages an intentionality of relationships that grows out of four key practices: caring conversations, family devotions, shared service, and rituals and traditions. Believing that faith is caught more than it is taught, Vibrant Faith offers concrete suggestions for ways that the church can engage in a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and the ministry of the home as they work together creating growing conditions that make space for the Holy Spirit to build and deepen faith at all ages and stages of life.



Leif Kehrwald

To reserve a \$10 lunch ticket that covers meals and meeting materials, please RSVP to me either at mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org OR call 713-526-2585, x224. Bring friends! Here's to congregations nurturing Vibrant Faith practices throughout the fabric of their shared lives!

community news

Texas Historical Commission recognizes church

The Texas Historical Commission has recognized The First Presbyterian Church of Brazoria by awarding it an Official Texas Historical Marker.

A dedication ceremony to commemorate the event will be held on Saturday, September 13, 10:30 a.m. at the church (310 S. Virginia Street in Brazoria.)

Following a brief program, light refreshments will be served. Copies of the church's history will be available for purchase. The First Presbyterian Church of Brazoria and the Brazoria County Historical



First Presbyterian Church, Brazoria

Commission invite the public to share in and witness this significant historical event.

This special day will also mark the 101st anniversary of the organization of the church.

Reconnect with friends!

All are invited to be part of 60th Anniversary of St. Andrew's PC, Beaumont, the weekend of September 27-28. Guest speaker on both Saturday and Sunday will be Dr. David McKechnie. Spread the word!

On Saturday there will be a 4:00 p.m. Social Hour, with activities



for children and youth. Dinner at 5:00 p.m. – seating limited. Reservations required for dinner only. A 60th Anniversary Program will follow at 7:00 p.m.

An anniversary worship service will be held Sunday, September 28, at 10:45 p.m. Dr. McKechnie will deliver the message with special music by Linda McKechnie. Reception to follow.

Please RSVP no later than Wednesday, September 10, by calling the church office at 409-892-8611 or go to the Response Page at www.saintandy.org. You may reserve a history book through the website.

Stoking the Fires of Generosity

The Biennial Development Conference of the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, "Stoking the Fires of Generosity," will take place Wednesday, October 1, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This educational and networking event will feature the wisdom and guidance of the Rev. Karl Travis, who will cover such topics as Getting Out of the Stewardship Rut; Talking the Talk, Walking the Walk; Understanding Your Audience; The

Buck Stops Where? and Hashtags, LOL, OMG, and more. RSVP for this free event at <https://www.tpf.org/events/event/stoking-the-fires-of-generosity-tpfs-biennial-development-conference/register/>.



Karl Travis

The Texas Presbyterian Foundation is located at 6100 Colwell Blvd., Irving, TX, 75039.

highlights

Greetings from a seafarer!

Approximately four years ago around Christmas time, I was in Baytown container terminal on a vessel called the *Saxonia Express*. It was my first time away from home and I was at sea training as a deck officer in the British Merchant Navy, essentially what you folks would call the Merchant Marine.

While on board at Christmas, we were given some items by the local seaman's mission chaplain as a gift on the run up to Christmas. Since I was away from my family, it was nice to think that someone cared enough that far away from home to take the time to put together this little gift. On that trip I spent almost five months away from my family, and it was without a doubt the toughest time I have ever spent at sea simply because of its duration.

There is a real difficulty in being a Christian and a seafarer, and yet it is difficult for a seafarer not to have religion. We face God's greatest power on a daily basis. On a number of occasions my number should have been called. I have been on a container ship that was battered by weather so



The Saxonia Express

badly that we had cracks in the cargo hold. I have even been on a ship that was inspected by a surveyor who noticed that our ship did not have water tight integrity, but it passed her fight to sail anyway. Soon after that we sailed into a typhoon and both myself and the chief officer spent most hours in the ballast control room, constantly pumping out the sea water getting into the forward hold. I have been lucky as a skeptic would say, but I would say I was within God's grace.

I thank you from deep down inside me for the generosity you showed me years ago and wish you the very best in the future!

Darryl

Upcoming Session Records Reviews and Treasurers Workshops

Clerks of Session are asked to pre-register for Session Record Review Workshops with Stated Clerk Lynn Hargrove, lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org (713-526-2585, ext. 210). Bring all session minutes since those last reviewed, including a copy of the page bearing the stamp indicating the last review, your church's Minutes Check Sheet, and your church's Church Register.

- **Sat., September 20**, at 10:00 a.m. the Presbytery Center, Houston
 - **Sat., October 25**, at 10:00 a.m. at Pines PC, Houston
 - **Sat., November 15**, after the presbytery meeting at Indian PC, Livingston
- Forbes Baker, Director of Business Affairs and Finance, offers helpful training and assistance to church treasurers and bookkeepers at Treasurers Workshops:
- **Sat., September 20**, at 10:00 a.m. the Presbytery Center, Houston
 - **Sat., October 25**, at 10:00 a.m. at Pines PC, Houston
 - **Sat., November 15**, during the presbytery meeting at Indian PC, Livingston, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. with a break for lunch.

Pre-register your attendance with Forbes, fbaker@pbyofnewcovenant.org or 713-526-2825, ext. 238.

Making History Today

Rev. Dr. James S. Currie, Executive Secretary
Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest



"Lest We Forget"

On the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, Rudyard Kipling wrote the poem "Recessional." It is actually a prayer which closes each of the first four stanzas with the phrase "Lest we forget - lest we forget!" The final line of the prayer closes with the words, "Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!"

The phrase "Lest we forget" came to mind as I realized that those in junior high or middle school today have no personal memory of the events of 9/11, images that are seared into the memory of most adults. I am increasingly aware of the growing number of persons who were not alive during the 1950s and 1960s, the height of the civil rights movement in this country. For some, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., may be little more than pictures in a history book. Then, there are those who maintain that the Holocaust of World War II never happened, that it is somehow a hoax.

None of us knew Abraham or Sarah. None of us were with Moses as he led the Israelites across the Red Sea and into the Sinai Desert. None of us were alive during the reigns of David or Solomon or any of their successors. Did any of us go into Babylon as exiles? None of us knew Jesus, none of us were in Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, none of us actually stood at the foot of the cross either with the Roman soldiers or with Jesus' mother and his friend John.

And yet, in another, more profound, sense we were all there with Abraham and Sarah, and with Moses and the Israelites, and with David and Solomon, and with those exiles, and with Jesus and his disciples and those Roman soldiers. We were there because we are part of that story. Someone (actually, many persons) told the story of faith and hope and redemption and salvation from generation to generation, such that we believe that gospel is meant as much for us in the 21st century as it was in the first century.

If we forget the story, we will lose our way. If we forget the story, we will forget who we are and whose we are. If we forget the story, we will lose sight of the transforming power of God's love and grace. If we forget the story, we lose all sense of direction for the future. The church is the agency that tells the story and sees that it is told from generation to generation.

As we make history today, may we remember that knowing the past is not an end in itself, but rather a way of moving into the future with hope and confidence, not in ourselves, but in the God who has loved us and brought us this far. "Lest we forget." "Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!" Indeed.



He's at it again!

Master Gardener Roy Kreitz, holds up his astounding cucumbers grown in the community garden at First PC, Pasadena. Lunch anyone?

Christmas International House

Christmas International House (CIH) is a peacekeeping and friendship program that invites international students who are attending college in the U.S. to stay with host families during the Christmas holiday break. These international students from all over the country are then able to experience American family life and Christmas traditions. Host families develop friendships and learn about the students' cultures. Many students and host families stay in contact through graduation and beyond, with many friendships lasting a lifetime.

The program runs December 18-January 2. Families from the Houston area may sign up to receive one or more international students in their home. During this holiday program, Houston activities are planned for the whole group. They tour downtown Houston, visit a ranch, and learn to line-dance at a local Presbyterian Church. They attend a Rockets' game, visit NASA, and go to museums. There is an international luncheon, where the students provide native dishes. Through shared meals and fellowship, all learn about one another.

Since several additional universities have signed up to participate this year, we expect a large number of student applicants. Many host families will be needed. Last year more than thirty applicants were denied to the Houston program because we did not have a family with whom they could stay.

In addition to providing host families, churches can donate funds towards the program. Funds are needed to pay for a van for transportation and for entrance fees to the various events. Churches also contribute through meals and activities. For more information about CIH or hosting a student, please contact Sheryl Tuttle, Houston CIH Coordinator, Woodforest PC, Houston, at 281-812-7704 or sheryltut@gmail.com.

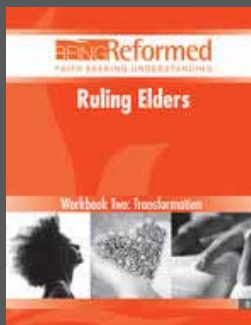


in the resource center

Ruling Elders: Formation and Ruling Elders: Transformation

New officer-training resources will inspire transformational leaders for your church! *Ruling Elders: Formation* (680836) guides newly appointed leaders through the discernment process and helps readers come to terms with the process: election to office, preparation for ordered ministry, ordination, and installation as a ruling elder on the session.

Ruling Elders: Transformation (680835) introduces six aspects of becoming a transformational leader: embracing change and discomfort, practicing spiritual discernment, approaching work as worship, keeping the Sabbath, practicing and promoting spiritual disciplines, and committing to self-awareness.



mission an

Kathi Neubert travels to Jerusalem

Our Peacemaking Ministry Associate, Kathi Neubert, who is sponsored by the Jewish/Presbyterian Dialogue Group of Houston and several Presbyterian and Jewish congregations, departed for Jerusalem August 25 for a year where she will serve at the Hand in Hand School. Please send notes of encouragement to Kathi at kathi.neubert@gmail.com.

Kathi will post her thoughts and experiences during this venture in a weekly blog which can be accessed at <http://theinvestmentreport.blogspot.com/>



Kathi Neubert, Hand in Hand School

MISSION STORIES: Older Adult Mobility

Through the generosity of individuals and a grant from the Synod of the Sun, Mo-Ranch recently purchased two scooters for use on the upper campus by persons who need the transportation assistance.

Pictured is Rev. Fane Downs, a frequent participant at Mo-Ranch conferences. Here is her response to these scooters: "I love these Mo-Ranch scooters. I was the first to use one during the recent women's conferences. I served on the faculty of this conference and needed some freedom to come and go. I did not want to tie the golf cart drivers up with special trips. I have some mobility issues and the scooter enabled me to go where I needed to be on time. The scooter is very easy to navigate, comfortable, and a great



Rev. Fane Downs

addition to Mo. Thanks for the grant from the Synod for this addition to Mo-Ranch. There are two scooters: I think they will be utilized well."

Scooters have been a frequent request from people attending conferences and retreats. Mo-Ranch intends to add two additional scooters per year for the next three years.

Theocademy: Being Presbyterian: Foundations of Presbyterian Discipleship (5-session DVD)

Although Theocademy videos are available for viewing free of charge via their website and on you tube, not every church has access to internet that would allow easy use of these excellent materials. These five video teaching segments (about 12 minutes each) lay excellent groundwork for new member classes or for officer training. Extensive discussion guides can be downloaded at www.theocademy.com.

d ministry

Links, Likes and follows: Spirituality in the Smartphone Age

The internet age is out of its infancy. Smartphones are here to stay. Google Glass is on the horizon. The potential for connection in the digital age is powerful and inspiring. And the need for intentionality and thoughtfulness about our consumption of technology is just as strong.

MaryAnn McKibben Dana will speak at Austin Presbyterian Seminary, Monday through Wednesday, October 20-22, about guiding congregations toward faithful, life-giving ways of engaging with technology. Building on her work in *Sabbath in the Suburbs*, this

conference will equip church educators to guide congregations in engaging with technology in faithful, life-giving ways.



MaryAnn Dana

MaryAnn is Co-Chair of NEXT Church, a movement that seeks to call forth and nurture vibrant and creative ministry. Register through the seminary website, <https://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=2777>.

POP's 40th Anniversary!

Mark Thursday, November 6, on your calendars now to be part of "Deep in the Heart of Texas!" Don't miss this 40th Anniversary Celebration of POP Ministry: 6:30-10:00 p.m. at Butler's Courtyard, 122 N. Michigan Ave. League City, TX 77573! Auction! BBQ! Awards!

Honorary Co-Chairs, Mrs. B. A. Bentsen and Lori Smith Johnson will help us celebrate "A Magnificent Seven!" Honorees include Diana Fuchs, Shirley Lawson, Carter Lee, Virginia McFarland, Donna Shifflette, Anny Vasquez, and Donna Walden. We will also recognize the Lay Chaplain of the Year - Dot Uthlaut!

Prayers of the People POP Ministry, which provides spiritual care for patients, family, and friends in the hospital, wants you to be part of this special celebration!



Contact AnneMarie Wallace, popministry@sbcglobal.net or 281-814-3362, for more information. Register at <https://www.presbyterianmissionexchange.org/pop-deep-in-the-heart-of-texas-2014>.

in the resource center



Feasting on the Gospels: Mark

This powerful preaching commentary on the Gospel of Mark features essays reflecting the theological, pastoral, exegetical, and homiletical questions raised by this earliest of the gospels. This is a helpful resource for all students of scripture, but especially to those committed to teaching through the gospel of Mark in the Lectionary B cycle.

youth @news

Getting REFOCUSED!

Our presbytery is partnering with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the presbyteries of Mission (San Antonio/Austin area) and Grace (Dallas/Fort Worth area) to provide a Youth Worker initiative called REFOCUS. This initiative, begun in the hearts and creative minds of a few, is now ready to become a reality!



REFOCUS is a three-year project to serve people who lead and work with youth in a Presbyterian congregational setting. REFOCUS will provide youth workers time to learn, fellowship, worship, and nurture their call as a youth worker. They will spend time in plenary session, small group discussion, personal reflection, and spiritual direction.

Five youth workers have been selected and invited to attend on behalf of our presbytery: Ryan Reitzammer (Northwoods), LuBecca Long (Brenham), Jessie Kuehner (Webster), Stephanie O'Connor (Galveston), and Charlie Hornes (Woodlands). REFOCUS will take place September 29–October 1 at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. <https://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=2802>.

Youth Rally!

Attention all youth and youth workers! Save Sunday, October 19, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. for Sunday morning worship "youth-style" followed by lunch, games, and a hands-on mission project! This event, to be held at Northwoods PC, Houston (3320



FM 1960 West, Houston 77068), is a great opportunity for New Covenant youth groups to get together to worship, fellowship, and make a difference through mission. Middle and High School youth and their adult sponsors are invited to this free event!



Conclaves 2015

Be sure to get date for Conclaves 2015 on your calendars now: February 20–22 and February 27–March 1. These fun, faith-filled retreat weekends for middle and high school youth

are led by New Covenant's Presbytery's Youth Connection Council (PYCC) at Cho-Yeh Camp & Conference Center, Livingston, TX. Watch for details!

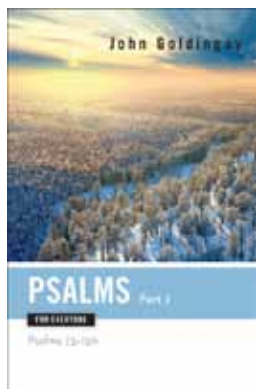


in the resource center new dvd and book resources



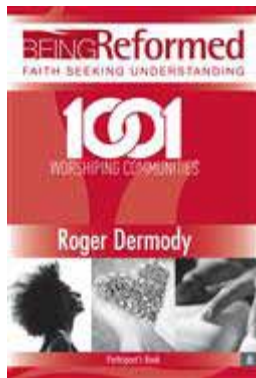
Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the CULTURE of NOW *By Walter Bruggemann*

With the growth of a 24/7 society of consumption and connectivity, Old Testament scholar Bruggemann addresses Sabbath keeping as far more than keeping rules. It is rather about being a whole person and restoring our world as a society that is less about consumption and instantaneous gratification to one that is more focuses on God, other people, and all of life.



Psalms for Everyone, Part 2 Psalms 73 - 150 *By John Goldingay*

Continuing the work done in the other entries in the Old Testament for Everyone series, Goldingay shows us four ways to speak to God in words of praise, thanksgiving, trust, and supplication. The brief commentary on each of these Psalms makes this particularly well designed for daily devotional use, but it could also be used for group study.



Being Reformed: 1001 Worshiping Communities

The PC(USA)'s initiative to establish 1001 new worshiping communities is an expression of the church's response to challenges and opportunities of our present day—social and cultural shifts that demand our best thinking about how to proclaim the gospel of Christ in changing contexts. This six-session study provides practical thought and suggestions for action toward understanding and establishing new worshiping communities today.



Partnering with the King: Study the Gospel of Matthew and Become a Disciple of Jesus *By John L. Hiigel*

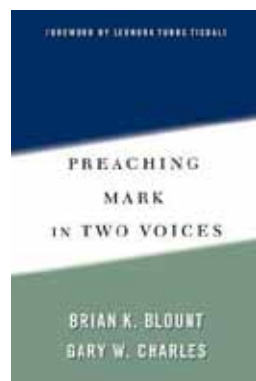
Thirty-one days of directed reading in Matthew and from Hiigel's book of the same name fuel this six-week DVD study of the gospel of Matthew and the call to discipleship. Commentary is insightful and accessible and the leader's guide for discussion serves as a guide to conversation. Hiigel helps the reader connect the gospel narrative clearly to Christian faith lived out in everyday life. A single copy of the book will circulate with the DVD. Individual student books should be purchased from the publisher.

books by Brian K. Blount



Invasion of the Dead: Preaching Resurrection

Blount, President of Union Presbyterian Seminary, addresses our secular and sacred obsessions with death and dying in this volume designed to help preachers proclaim resurrection. Exploring the portrait and meaning of resurrection in New Testament life, Blount draws his message of hope from Revelation, the letters of Paul, and the Gospel of Mark.



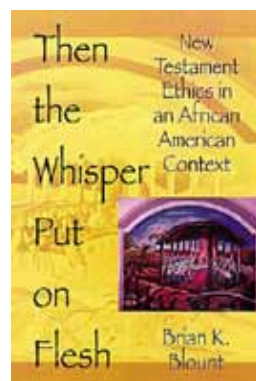
Preaching Mark in Two Voices *By Brian K. Blount and Gary Charles*

Twelve different periscopes (that's seminary talk for narrative passages) from the gospel of Mark offer the focus for outstanding preachers from two very different contexts to examine Mark's presentation of a boundary breaking Jesus. Blount reflects the challenges of the African American church as it challenges the heritage of slavery and oppression; Charles' context at the time of writing was from white privilege that also needed the challenge and comfort of Mark's urgent vision. Together they create an intriguing look at solid Markan scholarship and the art of preaching.



Revelation: A Commentary

In this volume from The New Testament Library, scholar and master preacher Blount provides a sure and confident guide through the difficult and sometime troubling passages of the final book of the New Testament. Revelation is a book that calls for prophetic reaction to the world that is an awe inspiring swirl of frightening violence and breathtaking hope.



Then the Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context

Scholar Blount helps readers – especially those who have not lived in oppressed circumstances – to understand the New Testament from the perspective of oppressed people. Through careful analysis he demonstrates how interpreting New Testament writings from the point of view of African American slaves reveals the underlying message of liberation in the biblical text. Chapters deal specifically with the Kingdom ethics of the synoptic gospels, John's liberating Christology, Paul's sometimes liberating theologies, and Revelation's witness of active resistance.

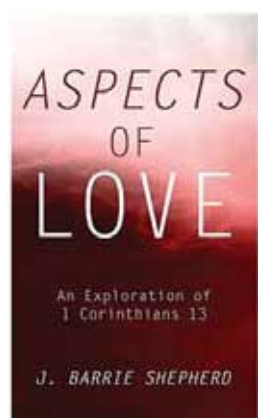
in the resource center new dvd and book resources

books by J. Barrie Shepherd



Seeing With the Soul: Daily Meditations on the Parables of Jesus in Luke

Presbyterian pastor and poet Shepherd's volume offers 30 days of morning and evening devotions that encourage the reader to look beyond what the eye can see to what the soul perceives. The volume offers a wonderful kick start to journaling with the parables of Jesus found in Luke.



Aspects of Love: An Exploration of 1 Corinthians 13

Writing with a poet's sensitivity toward language and rhythm, Shepherd uses verses from 1 Corinthians 13 to examine facets of love including communication, irritability, kindness, jealousy, humility, forgiveness, happiness, and hope.



When Your Life is On Fire: What Would You Save?

By Eric Kolbell

Minister and psychotherapist Kolbell asks thirteen notable people from a variety of walks of life the provocative question, "What do you value above all else in your life?" He not only captures the answers to their questions, but then provides a theological lens for connecting with the words offered. Reflection questions at the end of each chapter can generate either inner dialog or help with group discussion. This would be a wonderful discussion vehicle for individuals in the second half of life.

new covenant transitions

Meet New Covenant's newest pastors!



Kathleen Davies



Brian Long



Kristi Click



Brandon Gaide

Four Candidates completed their last step prior to ordination at the July presbytery meeting by preaching a sermon before the presbytery and a brief floor examination. We give thanks to God for these new leaders.

TE Kathleen Davies has been ordained and installed as Designated Pastor of Community of the Servant Savior in August. Kathleen received a BA degree in Religion from Baylor University and her MDiv from Yale Divinity School. Kathleen was Under Care in Southern New England Presbytery.

Kathleen's special interest in ministry is contemplative prayer, the labyrinth, and Mo Ranch. She enjoys the visual arts, movies as cultural signposts, connections, and reading. Kathleen is married to Tim Davies, a rocket scientist at NASA. They have a son in 8th grade and a daughter in 6th grade.

TE Brian Long was ordained in July at Atascocita PC where he was Under Care. In his thanks to the Atascocita congregation for their encouragement during his journey to ordination, Brian said, "As I leave you to take up a new role with a new congregation, I may leave you, but you will never leave me. The foundations built in the past few years are what I will build upon for the rest of my life." In August, Brian was installed as Designated Pastor of New Hope PC in Katy. Brian received a BA degree in Journalism from Texas A&M and his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary, Houston.

TE Kristi Click is serving as Designated Associate Pastor of Spring Branch, PC, Houston. In the fall of 2009, Kristi began her studies at Austin Seminary and during that time, she took a year off to serve a year in the highlands of Guatemala as a Young Adult Volunteer, a PC(USA) program through Presbyterian World Mission. When she returned stateside, she began her studies at UT for a MS in social work, concurrently with her MDiv studies. Kristi received the Hendrick-Smith Award for Mission and Evangelism, an award given to a particular graduate whose life direction is focused on evangelism and mission in this country or overseas.

TE Brandon Gaide is serving as Associate Pastor for Next Generation at Memorial Drive PC, Houston. He is the author of "The future of the church: Reflections on the hopes of young Presbyterian leaders" which was published in *The Outlook*, March 12, 2014. He and his wife Kelly are enjoying the joys of parenting a 2-year old and a 3-month-old baby girl. Brandon received a BA degree in Religious Studies at the UT at Austin, a diploma in Christian Studies from Regent College in Vancouver, a MTh. Degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Sacramento CA, and his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary in Houston.



Blessings and new adventures, Guinn!

The Rev. Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson was granted honorable retirement status (HR) effective Aug. 31, 2014. In her remarks at the July Presbytery meeting, Guinn vividly and with humor described what the times were like when she was ordained 31 years ago as a pastor. Guinn was

the first woman pastor to become a member of our presbytery during a time when women were not warmly received as ordained pastors.

Guinn received a BA in Humanities from the UT at Austin, her MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a DMin from the

Graduate Theological Foundation of Indiana. Guinn served as Head of Staff at Central PC, Houston, 1994-2001 and Interim Associate Pastor at Webster PC 2002-2003. She has been serving as Executive Director of United Campus Ministry of Greater Houston since 2003. Godspeed, Guinn!

2014 calendar

September 13

New Beginnings Assessment
John Knox PC
Houston

September 18

Fresh Elastic for
Stretched-Out Educators
Presbytery Center
Houston, TX

September 19-21

Young Adult Weekend
Mo-Ranch
Hunt, TX

September 20

Session Records Review
Treasurer's Workshop
Presbytery Center
Houston, TX

September 25-Oct.30

Powerful Tools for Caregiving
Interface Samaritan Counseling Center
at St. Philip PC
Houston, TX

September 29-October 1

Refocus for Youth Workers
Austin Presbyterian
Theological Seminary
Austin, TX

October 1

Stoking the Fires of Generosity
Texas Presbyterian Foundation
Irving, TX

October 2

Vibrant Faith Ministries
Leif Kehrwald
Spring Branch PC, TX

October 5

World Communion Sunday

October 7

Seasons of Caring Luncheon
Interface-Samaritan
Houston, TX

October 13-16

More Than None Conference
Montreat, NC

October 16-18

Administrative Personnel Association
National Conference
Albuquerque, NM

October 17

Renovare Prayer Retreat
Mo-Ranch
Hunt, TX

October 20-22

Spirituality the Smartphone Age
Austin Theological Seminary
Austin, TX

what's happening ... upcoming events and gatherings

September 18



If you are a volunteer, paid staff person, teaching elder or just curious, you are invited to the next gathering of Fresh Elastic for Stretched-Out Educators Thursday, September 18, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on the Presbytery Center (111- Lovett Blvd.).

What happened to summer?! Yes, it is already time to be thinking of Advent and how we can make it the best Advent ever for our congregations and ourselves. The Fresh Elastic group will talk about "Giving Something Up for Advent" (or simplifying what we already do) and explore how that can impact our churches and our personal expectations of what Advent is meant to be. Please bring a copy of your church's mission statement to examine if what is on your church calendar for Advent fulfills what we desire to accomplish during this season as a family of faith.

This session will be facilitated by folks with a seasoned heart for education. Please feel free to contact any one of them if you have questions. Jo Ann Currie (jcurrie51@yahoo.com), Connie Nyquist (lnyquist@sbcglobal.net), Kim Shrull (kshrull@earthlink.net), or Anne Wilson (anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com).

Lunch will be provided, complete with beverage and dessert. To help in our planning, please RSVP to anne.aiko.wilson@gmail.com by Monday morning, September 15, 2014.

October 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1

HOUSTON HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Tours offered by Houston's Holocaust Museum October 11, 18, 25, November 1, will take place 10:30 a.m. to noon. These tours are especially suited for confirmation classes in telling the story of how Bonhoeffer defined the relationship between church and state, his call for the faith-based community to take a stand against oppression and to refuse to be silent bystanders in the face of injustice inflicted upon anyone. Watch for more information in a future issue of *Tuesday Connect*.

October 7

2014 Seasons of Caring Luncheon – a compelling story

Interface-Samaritan Counseling Centers hold its 15th annual Seasons of Caring Luncheon Tuesday, October 7, at noon at the River Oaks Country Club. The speaker this year will be Elizabeth McIngvale, Ph. D, the founder of The Peace of Mind Foundation and daughter of Jim "Mack" and Linda McIngvale. Elizabeth will tell of her struggle with—and management of—Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Her story is a powerful and inspiring testimony to the power of faith and skilled counseling for any individual seeking to cultivate a fully productive life despite the challenges of mental illness.

What does faith have to do with mental health? For over 40 years, Interface has been at the center of this discussion in Houston. Interface's counseling and mental health education services are offered from a Christian perspective with a holistic approach that treats mind, body, and spirit. Since 1972 Interface has provided quality, affordable services to clients of all income levels and faith traditions.

This year the Luncheon will also feature the presentation of three annual "Samaritan for All Seasons" awards for generosity of spirit and for selfless giving to those who are most in need. This year, our distinguished Samaritans are: James and Sandra Cooper, Dr. L.E. and Shelley Richey, and The Reverend Tommy Thompson

If you're interested in attending or underwriting the luncheon, call 713-626-7990, ext. 104. If you'd simply like to make a donation, visit Interface-Samaritan's website at <http://www.interface-samaritan.org/donate/>.



Elizabeth McIngvale

what's happening... upcoming events and gatherings

October 13 - 16

More Than None: Engaging the Religiously Unaffiliated

There is a growing number of people in the U.S. who resist identifying themselves with a particular religious tradition. They are not atheists. They are not apathetic. They often describe themselves as people who are seeking to know God.



What can people of faith learn from these “nones?” What do they teach us about how our churches and faith communities have failed to model a meaningful message? How might we join hands together, as seekers, in our common quest to live in “interactive” relationship with God?

A conference at Montreat, October 13-16, will offer an opportunity to explore what it might look like to fellowship with those who seek God outside the walls of the institutional church.

For more information and registration, visit <http://www.montreat.org/event/more-than-none>

October 20 - 23

Couples in Ministry Conference at Mo-Ranch



Couples who both serve as professionals in a ministry setting experience unique personal and professional challenges, rewards, and successes. This conference, to be held Monday-Thursday, October 20-23 at Mo-Ranch, is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for such couples to come together to explore their calls to ministry as individuals and as a couple, and to talk with other couples who share their unique situation. It also provides time to simply reconnect with their spouse.

Encourage couples you know who are serving as church professionals, ordained and non-ordained, to attend this conference. For more information contact: Revs. Caressa and Jonathan Murray (conference directors) at 281-798-5993, cmurray@pbyofnewcovenant.org. Information and Registration at <http://www.moranch.org/Camps-Conferences/Conferences/Couples-in-Ministry>.

October 17 - 19



RENOVARÉ PRAYER RETREAT

“Responding to God’s Love: Finding Joy and Grace in Celebrating the Disciplines” will be theme of the Renovaré Prayer Retreat, to be held October 17-19 at Mo-Ranch. Prayer is the interactive conversation with God about what we are doing together. It is a process of lifelong learning as we seek to approach our Father with openness, honesty, and trust as his child.

Renovaré seeks to resource, fuel, model, and advocate more intentional living and Spiritual Formation among Christians and those wanting a deeper connection with God. A foundational presence in the Spiritual Formation movement for over 20 years, Renovaré is Christian in commitment, ecumenical in breadth, and international in scope.

Details at <http://www.moranch.org/Camps-Conferences/Conferences/Renovar%C3%A9>
Register online <https://nucamps.com/moranch/events/CheckAvailability.asp?EventID=27>
or call 800-460-4401, ext. 229.

November 1 - December 2

Create and train a Worship Arts Team!

Dr. Marcia McFee, a nationally-known worship designer, professor and consultant, is coming to Houston to host a special series of workshops on Worship. In the last 24 years she has helped churches create more vital and sensory-rich worship, no matter the size of church or style of worship.



Marcia McFee

Atascocita PC will be hosting the Worship Design Studio Experience, a series of workshops with Dr. McFee for which churches may register and send unlimited numbers of people to be trained for a more creative process of worship design.

Workshops are scheduled weekly from November 1-December 2. Registered churches will also receive recordings of all the workshops. For more information and to register, visit <https://ny163.infusionsoft.com/app/page/houstonexperience>.

“No matter the denomination or style of worship, no matter the size of congregation, worship that is theologically, biblically and symbolically rich, communicated in sensory-rich ways, and facilitated by leaders with spiritual depth, can transform lives.” – Worship Design website

October 21



**SAVE THE
DATE**

G. Scott Morris, M.D., the founder and chief executive officer of the Church Health Center in Memphis, Tennessee, will present the 9th annual Sister Alice Potts

Lecture: “The church’s role in health care: Why the church and people of faith should care about health and health care.” The event, sponsored by Chaplaincy and Pastoral Education,

will take place at M.D. Anderson Tuesday, October 21, 8:00 a.m. in Mays Clinic, Floor 1, near Elevator S in the Telehealth Classroom (ACB1.2345).

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

TE Andrew and Jordan Keyes, Southminster Presbyterian, Missouri City) –son Carter Matthew Keyes was born June 17, 2014.

TEs Bob (First Presbyterian, Galveston) and Laurey Murphy (Spring Branch Presbyterian, Houston) – their first grandchild, Henry Hartwell Mull, was born June 24, 2014, in North Carolina.

Family and friends of Rev. Ron Guinn (HR) – Ron, a former moderator of our presbytery) died July 2, 2014. He served New Covenant churches in Sugar Land and Beaumont.

TE Shane and Sarah Webb – son Daniel Kermit Webb was born July 9, 2014. Shane, a former TE in New Covenant, is currently pastor at First Presbyterian, Mt. Pleasant, TX.

Anne Wilson and family – Anne's father, Kenneth Takehara, died July 9, 2014. He was a highly decorated WWII veteran. Anne, a member of St. Philip Presbyterian, Houston, is active in the presbytery's Fresh Elastic Group and the Association of Presbyterian Educators.

RE Bart Henson, Memorial Drive Presbyterian, Houston – Bart is serving as chair of the Stewardship Committee of the Synod of the Sun.

Family and friends of RE Addison McElroy, Pines PC, Houston – Addison died July 20, 2014, at the age of 90. Addison was very active in the presbytery in the 70s and 80s.

Candidate Ray and Greta Henderson and family, Northwoods PC, Houston – their young grandson, Reed, died August 12, 2014. Ray and Greta are charter members of Northwoods and long-time Sunday School teachers.

Family and friends of RE Thalia Bunnell – Thalia died July 24, 2014. Thalia and her husband were founding members of St. John's Presbyterian, Houston.

Family and friends of RE Karen Bates, First Presbyterian, Sugar Land – Karen died July 21, 2014. She and her husband Rick served as youth advisors at Westminster Presbyterian, Houston for twelve years.

Kendall Boyd and family – Kendall is recovering from cancer surgery. Kendall served as New Covenant's Director of Recovery and is the brother of TE Kevin Boyd.

TE Connie Alexander (HR) – foot surgery on August 26, 2014.

HR = Honorably Retired | TE = Teaching Elder (Rev.) | RE = Ruling Elder | NWC = New Worshipping Community



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